

A
WARNING
For Israel,

IN
A SERMON PREACHED
AT CHRIST-CHVRCH, IN
Dublin, the 30. of October, 1625.

By Henry Leslie, one of his Majesties
Chaplaines in Ordinary.

PROVERB. 22. 3.

*A prudent man foreseeth the evil & hideth himselfe, but the foolish
goe on still and are punished.*

LUKE. 19. 42.

*O if thou haddest even knowne, at the least in this thy day, these
things which belong unto thy peace!*

Imprinted at Dublin by the Societie of
STATIONERS, Anno 1625.

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TO THE RIGHT
HONOURABLE, HENRY,
LORD VISCOUNT FALKELAND,
Lord Deputie generall of the Kingdome
of IRELAND.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,



Neither as valewing your great-
nesse or abilitie, present this before
your Honour; but your goodnesse and
vertue: not that I thinke the subject
unfit your consideration, but because
I am iealous of the compiler. Yet my
presumption is not great, for what I now doe, is obedience,
yea but seconding in action, what your Honour thought
worthy to be effected. Discourses of this nature have
not many Patrons: and to see great men busie both their
senses with Divinitie, is mirum in terris. Yet the
Church hath had a Sergius Paulus, a prudent Deputy,
and a Publius also, from whom our Apostle might re-
ceive encouragement: and we have not lost, but changed
our late learned King, that mixed his meales with di-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

vine thoughts, and taught his Nobles the like wisdom: and herein I know not whether we can judge him more happy in his Princely power, or Priestly prudence. That path that honoured him a King, may crowne you a subject. Neyther doe I provoke you by the father, as if there were nothing imitable in the sonne; for who doth not see freshly budding in his sacred person, what his Father presented to us in full eare? And your glory will be no lesse in imitating his graces, then in presenting his person.

This (whatsoever it is) I place at your Lordships feet, if it please you, as well published as presented, I have my desire: but if it fayle herein, I shall not want to rejoyce that it once gave content. God adde to your dayes, honours and graces, and make you a true professor of his distressed Church in this kingdome; as also that your Lordship may long remaine with us a firme
columnne for the upholding the peace and
tranquilitie of this State. For which,
(with the rest of your true Ho-
nourers) I shall ever
pray.

Your Honours in all duty
and service

HENRY LESLY.



A VVARNING FOR ISRAEL.

H O S E A 14. V E R S. 2.

*O Israel, returne unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen
by thine iniquitie.*



It is the ordinary method of the Prophets, first to threaten, and then to comfort; first to denounce Gods judgements, and after to promise mercie and forgivenesse: And accordingly the Prophet Hosea in this 14. Chapter (which is a breviary, and compend of the whole prophetic) begins with a threatening in the former verse, *Samaria shall become desolate; for shee hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword, their Infants shall bee dashed into peeces, and their women with childe shall bee ript up.* And after in the first verse, there followeth a promise: *I will heale their rebellion, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him.* What can bee the cause of such a suddaine change? Iudgement is presently turned into mercie: and the reason is, because the threatnings, and the promises of God in Scripture are conditionall. The threatening in the former verse is conditionall; *Samaria shall bee desolate* (namely) unless she repent. The promise likewise

vers. 5. is conditionall; *I will heale their rebellion* (namely) if so be they doe repent: and therefore between the threatening and the promise, there is interlaced an exhortation to repentance, *O Israel, returne unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.*

Where consider with me, first the exhortation it selfe, [*O Israel returne unto the Lord*] & then the arguments to inforce this exhortation, which are two; one taken from Gods mercy. [*Hee is thy God*] another taken from their owne misery [*for thou hast fallen by thine iniquitie.*] Againe in the exhortation, consider first, the people exhorted, [*O Israel*] & then the dutie required; [*Returne unto the Lord.*] *O Israel returne unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquitie.*

The people exhorted, is *Israel*, whereby wee may understand, eyther the ten Tribes who made defection from the house of *David*, following after *Ieroboam*, against whom the judgement is denounced in the former *verse*: under the name of *Samarita*, because *Samarita* was the Metropolitan Citie of that kingdome: or else by *Israel* wee may understand that *Israel* which was in the land of *Judah*, for these two Tribes of *Judah* and *Benjamin* are often called *Israel* by a *Synecdoche*. If by *Israel* we understand the tenne Tribes, against whom the judgement was threatened, then it ministers unto us these two instructions. First, that Gods threatnings in Scripture are conditionall, for in the former *verse*, desolation is threatened against *Israel*, and yet heere he exhorts *Israel* to repentance, that so hee might prevent that desolation. Now unlesse in the threatening *Samarita* shal be desolate, there were understood this condition, except she repent, the subsequent exhortation were in vaine: and indeede it is a certaine rule set downe by God himselfe, *When I have spoken against a nation*

tion to destroy them, and to roote them out: If they repent of their sinnes, I will repent of the evill I thought to bring upon them: & againe, If the wicked will returne from all his sins, he shall surely live & shall not die. Hence it is that God many times seemes to repeale his sentence, according to that of Gregory. *Novit Deus aliquādo mutare sētētiā, sed nūquā novit mutare cōsiliū*, he changes his sentence, not his purpose: It was Gods sentence aganist Nineveh, Yet fortie dayes, & Nineveh shall be destroyed. It was Gods sentence to Hezekiah, Put thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live: *Isai. 38. 1.* and yet neyther of these came to passe at that time. Doth this argue any inconstancie in God, or want of power that hee could not performe what hee had spoken? No, God forbid; God is not as man that he should lye, neyther as the sonne of man that he should repent: Hath he said, and shall he not doe it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not accomplish it? I am the Lord and change not, *Mal. 3. 6.* My counsell shall stand, and my will shall be done, *Isa. 46. 10.* But the reason is, because all the threatnings of God are conditionall, although the condition be not expresse. God said to Abimelech, Thou shalt die, because of the woman which thou hast taken, *Gen. 20. 3.* This would seeme an absolute sentence; yet was it onely conditionall, for God saith unto him againe *vers. 7.* Deliver the man his wife; if not, thou shalt die. Thus the condition sometimes is expresse, and alwaies is to be understood, according to that generall rule, *Jerem. 18. 7. 8.* So fortie dayes and Nineveh shall be destroyed, the condition is to be understood, except they repent. Hezekiah shall die: The condition is understood, unlesse hee sue unto God by prayer for a prorogation of his life. Now the condition being performed, the sentence was voyde. So heere, Samaria shall be desolate, a condition must be understood, unlesse shee repent; otherwise, to what purpose were

were this exhortation, *O Israel, returne.*

Jerem 35.15.

Isa 22.13.

Secondly, hence we learne that God gives warning before he punish. *Samarita* must become desolate, but first the Lord must send vnto them, and forewarne them by the mouth of a Prophet, of that desolation, exhorting them to prevent it by repentance; that so they might be without all excuse. He gave warning to the old world by his servant *Noah*, a preacher of righteousness; to *Sodome* by *Lot*; to the *Jewes* by the *Prophets* that lived before the captivitie: *Hee sent vnto them all his servants the Prophets rising up early, and saying, returne now every man from his evill way, & amend your works.* Finally, hee gave warning to *Ierusalem* before her destruction by his owne Sonne, protesting of his desire to reclayme them. *Ierusalem, Ierusalem; How often would I have gathered thy children, as the Henne gathereth her chickens under her wings, and yee would not? Behold your habitation shalbe left desolate.* So he gives us warning at this time of an evill to come upon us. Even, *In this day doth the Lord God of hostes, call to weeping, and mourning, to baldnesse, and girding with sackcloth.* There is a threefold call to give us warning; one occasionall, our sinnes; another reall, Gods judgements already begun; a third vocall, the admonitions of Gods faithfull servants. Gods wrath in Scripture is compared to fire: and as a fire is knowne, eyther by the smoake (as a signe alwayes accompanying fire) or by the flames breaking forth, or by the relation of others: So may Gods wrath now be knowne by such three things. First, by the great sinnes of the land as a signe, or rather cause of Gods wrath, and a most certaine fore-runner, and fore-warner of a future destruction. For it is a generall rule sufficiently proved both by Scripture and experience, that wheresoever sin doth raigne, there Gods wrath is imminent; but sinne raigneth

raigneth in this land (I dare say, in no place more) without
controlment. Wee have exceeded, not onely *Israel*, but
also *Sodome & Gomorrah*, in all their abominations. Now, *Jerem 5. 9.*
Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord? Or shall not
my soule be avenged on such a nation as this? Yea sure, hee
must visit; If oppression and factledge; If Idolatric and
want of the knowledge of God; If incest and innocent
bloud; If briberie and extortion; If neglect of the wid-
dow and fatherlesse; If oathes and perjurie; If drunkenesse
and gluttony; If pride, avarice and ambition; If fraud and
robbery; If prophanation of the Sabbath, and contempt
of Gods word, worship and servants: Finally, If all these,
committed commonly in everie place, openly in the sight
of the Sunne, and safely without punishment, can draw
downe the judgements of God upon a nation, then how
shall it be possible for us to escape? Thus our sinnes give
us warning of Gods judgements. Secondly, the flames of
this fire doe already breake out, and these beginnings of
Gods judgements give us warning of a greater destructi-
on, for when God takes a people in hand for to schoole
them, he will eyther mend them, or end them: and there-
fore he begins with milde chastisements (but if these doe
not prevaile) he proceedes to sharper corrections. In the 5.
Chap. of *Hosea* vers. 12. he threatneth a gentle correction:
I will be unto Ephraim as a Moath, & unto the house of Iudah *Hos 5. 12.*
as a rottennesse. But this did no good, they were not affe-
cted with the slow gnawing of a small moath: there-
fore hee threatneth a heavier judgement. vers. 14. *I will*
be unto Ephraim as a Lyon, and as a young Lyon to the house *Hos 5. 14.*
of Iudah. And *Levit. 26.* hee threatneth severall plagues
against the transgressors of his law: first sickennesse, vers. 16.
then famine: vers. 19. 20. after that, destruction of their
Cattle, vers. 22. and after that, the sword. vers. 25. and last-

ly the pestilence *ibid*: And after each judgement he addeth; *And if yee will not yet for all this obey mee, but walke stubburnely against mee, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you.* So now the Lord hath begun these yeares past to visit us with famine, with death and mortalitie; these are but the beginnings of evill: and unlesse we repent, he hath heavier judgements in store for us, he will even take his three stringed whippe in his hand, which will pierce our skinne, were it never so thicke. This is the second warning. Thirdly, there is yet a third, by the voyce of the Prophets, calling unto you, that unlesse yee repent, yee shall die in your sinnes. We have not now Prophets immediately inspired by the holy Spirit to foretell things to come, these were for the infancie of the Church, now the Church being built, God will have it governed by ordinary Pastors: but we have Prophets for expounding of the Law, that can foretell you of Gods judgements, by infallible consequence out of Gods word, and by application of these threatnings which they finde in the Law against impenitent sinners after this manner: Who so persevere in sinnes, & harden their hearts against all admonitions, shalbe overtaken with Gods judgements: but this people persevere in their sinnes, &c. Thus ought wee to binde your sinnes upon your consciences, and if we doe not, your blood will be required at our hands. Yee know what charge God gave vnto Ezechiel, Sonne of man

I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore, heare the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me: When I shall say unto the wicked thou shalt surely die, and thou givest not him warning, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquitie; but his blood will I require at thine hand. But if thou warne the wicked, and he turne not from his wickednesse, he shall die in his iniquitie, but thou hast delivered

livered thy soule. The same charge lyeth upon these whom God now hath made watchmen unto the house of Israel: for Chap. 33. 2. the same dutie is required from ordinarie Ministers who receive their calling from men. *If the people of the land take a man from among them, and set him for their watchman, if when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the Trumpet and vvarne the people, then hee that will not be warned his bloud shall be upon his owne head, &c.* But as in the dayes of Ieremie there were lying Prophets, that prophesied peace, when destruction was at hand; saying, that God would *breake the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, within the space of two yeares, and so heale the hurt of the people with sweete wordes:* So there are at this time that love to preach *Placentia*, and make Sermons, as the Poet did his fables, *Populo ut placerent: Sowing pillowes under the elbowes of the wicked.* The occasion is, because they seeke great things for themselves, therefore doe they studie to please men: for they see that Zedekiah will be beleevved, when Micajah will be sent to prison, and fed with the bread of affliction: and Pashur will be a governor in the house of the Lord, when the Prophet Ieremiah by his authoritie shall be put in the stockes. For these are the times foretold by the Apostle, wherein the itching eares of men cannot abide wholsome doctrine, but *They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhorre him that speaketh uprightly:* as Achab hated Micajah, because he prophesied evill, that is, he faithfully warned him of that judgement which afterward came upon him. Wee are come to such an height of iniquitie, as Israel was when shee could not indure the rebukes of eyther Priest or Prophet. *Let none rebuke nor reprove another* (saith the Lord) *for this people are as they that rebuke the Priest.* And by the Prophet Isaiah, *They say unto the Seers, see not; and*

Ezech. 33. 23.

J:rem. 28. 12.

1:rem. 8. 11

1. King. 22.

1 rem. 30. 1. 2.

2 Tim. 4. 3.

Amos 5. 10.

Nos. 4. 4

Isai. 39. 10.

Jerem. 45. 4.

2 b 32 21.

2 King 22. 14.

to the Prophets, prophesie not unto us right things, but speake flattering things unto us. And Micah. 2. 11. If a man will say, I will prophesie unto thee of Wine & of strong drinke (that is, if hee will tell them pleasant tales) hee shall even be the Prophet of this people. But it behooveth us whom the Lord hath made watchmen over his Ierusalem, if we will deliver our owne soules, and be free from the bloud of all men, to blow the Trumpet, and give warning to the wicked. Let us remember that caveat which the Lord gave unto Baruch. Behold that which I have built, will I destroy, and that which I have planted, will I plucke up, even this whole land, and seekest thou great things for thy selfe? Seeke them not. And so let us say with Elihu, I know not to give flattering titles unto man; for in so doing my maker should take me away suddainely. Let us resolve with Micajah, As the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord saith unto me, that will I speake. Although Zedekiah doe smite mee on the cheek and Amaziah informe against mee to Ieroboam, and others diswade mee from prophesying at Bethel, because it is the Kings Court: yet for Sions sake I will not hold my peace, but I will lift up my voyce like a Trumpet, and shew the people their sinnes, and forewarne them of Gods judgements, crying, Samaria shall be desolate, and therefore O Israel returne unto the Lord.

Againe, if by Israel, wee understand them of the land of Iudah, then yee shall observe from hence; That the corrections of other men, should be our instructions; the judgements of God upon others, should waken us up, and make us looke about us, to see whether or not we be in the like danger. If our neighbours house be on fire, it is time to looke to our owne: If Samaria become desolate, then let that Israel which is in the land of Iudah take heede, least, as they have beene partaker with her, in her sinnes,

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sinnes, so they doe also receive of her plagues. Now I can tell you that *Samaria* is become desolate: The wrath of God in a great measure hath sealed upon our neighbor Nations, that they may take up the same lamentation that *Jeremie* did, *The sword devoureth abroad, and death is at home.* Even that famous Citie of *London* is now become a fearefull spectacle of Gods judgements: God hath met with her in the Moneth of her affliction. Men women and Children, fall downe in the streetes, smitten, not with the sword of the *Assirians*, that were sent against *Samaria*, but by the sword of the destroying Angell, that slew the *Assirians*: in a word, there is nothing but desolation in her streetes, *Rachel* mourning for her children, & cannot be comforted. O Lord. What have they deserved which wee have not? Were they more vile and abominable then wee? No, *Thinke not that those eightene upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, were greater sinners then others: I tell you, nay; but except yee amend your lines, yee shall all likewise perish.* What (I pray you) are the sinnes for which it hath pleased God to enter into judgement with our neighbour Nation? Is it the pride and prodigallitic of England? Is it their drunkeanesse, and gluttonie? Is it their luxurie and uncleannesse? Is it their oathes and oppression? Or finally, Is it their contempt of Gods word and formall hypocrisie? Looke upon your selves with unpartiall eyes, and yee will finde, that wee have justified our sister *Samaria* in all her abominations, that the Lord may justly take up against us the same complaint he doth against *Judah*, *Jerem. 3. 8. When backesliding Israel committed adulterie, and I had put her away; and given her a Bill of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.* What will follow hereupon, but as is *Isai. 10. 12. Shall I not, as I have*

Lament. 1. 10.

Luke. 13. 4.

Jerem. 3. 8.

Isai. 10. 12.

*Ioseph. antiq. lib.
lib. 11. cap. 8.*

2 King. 17. 33.

*Ioseph. antiq. lib.
9. cap. ult.*

Iohn. 4. 20

*Iohn. 4. 12.
Ioseph. antiq. lib.
11. cap. 8.*

*Ioseph. antiq. lib.
9. cap. ult.*

done unto *Samaria* and her *Idoles*, so doe to *Ierusalem* and her *Idols*? But let the Kingdome of *England* rather be *Iudab*, and this (where wee live) *Samaria*: and so the application will suite better. For yee know, *Iudab* was the first and the mother kingdome, so is *England* to us: *Samaria* was farre more corrupt in Religion then *Iudab*, having onely a shew of truth, in Circumcision, Temple, Priest, Books of *Moses*: so is this Kingdome where we live. The *Samaritanes* were a mixt people of *Iewes* and *Gentiles*; so are wee heere. The *Samaritanes* had a mixt worship; for in *Samaria* both the God of *Israel*, and the Gods of the Nations were worshipped: and would to God it were not so heere. Is there not in everie Towne, Village, and Corner of the Kingdome, a mount *Gerizim*, whereupon they bragge their Fathers to have worshipped? Is there not a succession of Priests sacrificing upon everie mountaine, and under everie greene Tree? and (least thus succession should fayle for want of issue, because they have no wives of their owne.) Is there not a continuall supply every day from *Rome*? And finally, Are there not many Relickes of Saints, and holy Wells, of more worth (if yee will beleeve them) then *Iacobs Well* in *Samaria*? Besides, *Samaria* was a receptacle for all fugitive persons who were not suffered to live at *Ierusalem*, for strange wives, or for other crimes, for which cause their Temple was called *Templum transgressorum*: And what better is this of ours? Doe not all sort of malefactors flie hither as unto a Citie of refuge, who dare not live at home, some for strange wives, some for bloud, some for theft, and the best for debt; making this land a verie denne of theeves? Lastly, *Iosephus* reports that the *Samaritanes*, whensoever the *Iewes* were in prosperitie, would be accounted *Iewes*; but when the *Iewes* were oppressed by their enemies, then they did

disclaime all affinitie with *Jewes*, as having their progenie from *Assiria*, and joyned with their enemies: and, Is it not to be feared that we have such fayned friends among us, that now professe themselves subjects to our Kings Majestie, none better, nor more desirous of the peace of the Kingdome; who yet if the *Assirians* should come against us, would prove our most dangerous enemies? If the *Pope* have their hearts, the *Spaniard* will have their service. In all these respects may this Kingdome be called *Samaria*. Well then, Hath God begun to visit *Judah*? What shall become of *Samaria*? and if judgement begin at Gods owne house What shall the end bee of them which obey not the Gospell? If this bee done to the greene Tree, What shall become of the drie wood? If God spare not the naturall branches, How will he spare us who are but wilde Olives? Remember what God saith to the *Jewes* who sojourned in the land of *Egypt*, when *Nebuchadnezzar* had subdued *Judah*, because they were not affected with the evill that was to come upon their mother nation, *Ierem. Chap. 44.* *Yee have seene all the evill that I have brought upon Ierusalem, and upon all the Cities of Iudah, how they are desolate because of their wickednesse — yet they (namely that remaine in the land of Egypt) are not humbled unto this day, neyther have they feared — therefore thus saith the Lord of hostes, I will set my face against you — and I will visit them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have visited Ierusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.* Now our case is just as theirs was. Wee sojourne here in a land of darkenesse, like *Egypt*, and wee have seene what evill the Lord hath brought upon our mother nation, because of their sinnes, yet are not wee humbled unto this day, neyther have wee feared: What remayneth then? But thus God

i, Pet, 4, 17

Yer, 33

10

11

12

God

1, Cor, 10, 6

Proverb, 22, 3

God visit us, as he hath done them? Therefore learne from the correction of your neighbours to returne unto the Lord in time, and make your peace with God. The punishments of the *Iewes*, are our ensamples (saith the Apostle) to the intent that *Wee should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.* The judgements of God upon our neighbours, should be unto us as those arrowes whereby *Ionathan* forewarned *David* of the Kings displeasure: he shot not at him, but over and beyond him; yet *David* understood thereby that the King was angrie, and made hast to be gone; so may wee perceive by these darts that come from heaven, and fall not upon us but neere unto us, that Gods wrath is kindled against us; and therefore wee shall doe well, to get up as *David* did, and make hast to flie from the face of an angrie God, hiding our selves in the holes of that rocke **C H R I S T I A N S**, who is a propitiation for our sinnes, *Salomon* saith, *A prudent man seeth the plague and hideth himselfe.* He seeth it in the Oracles of the Prophets, in the sinnes of the people, especially when it is begun upon others, and *he hideth himselfe*, that is, he prevents it by repentance, hee makes his peace with God, he hides himselfe under the mantle of Christs righteousness; hee gets the dore-postes of his heart to be sprinkled with the bloud of that immaculate Lambe, that so hee may bee safe from the hand of a destroying Angell in the day of the fiercenesse of Gods wrath. God graunt unto us all this wisdom to foresee the plague, and hide our selves; for behold I give you warning, *Samarita* is become desolate, therefore *let Israel returne.*

From the people exhorted, I come to the dutie required, which is, to returne unto the Lord. This phrase *Returne*, is a Metaphor drawen from travellers, who having lost their way, must come backe againe and returne into
the

the right way. Beloved, wee all are (or should be) travellers to heaven, where our home is; but we have strayed out of the way, and gone a quite contrarie course: wee are prodigall children that have departed from our fathers house, and gone into a farre countrie: wee are lost sheepe that have strayed from the fold. *All we like sheepe have gone astray; vee have turned every one to his one way.* Wee have strayed out of Gods pastures, into Sathans inclosures; therefore wee must turne backe againe, and set our faces towards God, upon whom wee have turned our backs. The word is not simply to turne from one thing to another, but to returne, namely, to that which wee was before: implying three things. First, that once they were with the Lord. Secondly, that they had gone away from him. Thirdly, that they must come home to him againe. This is true of all men. Wee were once with God, for being created after his image, wee had fellowship with God, and God with us. But wee did fall away from God, and became his enemies; for sinne turnes and averts a mans soule from God, according to that of the Prophet, *Your iniquities have separated betweene you, and your God: and your sinnes have hid his face from you:* And now unlesse wee would perish, it behooveth us to returne againe to him. But in a speciall manner this agreeth to the people of *Israel*. They were Gods people, not onely by creation, but by particular adoption. The Lord did chuse them above all the people of the earth, to set his love upon them; they were a holy people, a royall Nation, a chosen generation, to the Lord their God: hee dealt not so with everie Nation, as with them; for he gave his Lawes unto *Jacob*, and his testimonies to *Israel*. To them were committed the Oracles of God; to them did appertaine the adoption, and the glorie, and the covenants, and the giving

Jerem. 3. 6.
Jerem. 3. 13.

giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises, of them were the Fathers, and of them concerning the flesh, CHRIST came. Yet such was their ungratitude, that they did kicke up their heeles against the Lord their Master and Maker; they went away from him a whoring after their owne inventions: They committed Idolatrie upon everie mountaine, and under everie greene Tree. In a word, they forsooke the Lord the fountaine of living waters, and digged unto themselves Cisterns that could hold no water. And now here God by his judgements doth call them to returne againe unto him. *O Israel, returne.*

Heere (before I proceede any further) observe with mee, That humiliation goeth alwayes before grace, the sense and apprehension of our owne wandring from God, is the onely way and meanes to bring us to God. *Notitia peccati, initium salutis. The right understanding and true acknowledgement of our owne miserie, is the first steppe to salvation:* for if Israel must returne to the Lord, then she must be possessed with an opinion of her owne wandring from the Lord, shee must see that shee hath gone astray, and that there is no true comfort to be found in those pathes of sinne, in which shee walked. For, How can a man frame himselfe to enter into a right course, till hee bee fully resolved and perswaded within himselfe, that hee hath beene mistaken in his former course of life? So the prodigall sonne (a true patterne of a penitent sinner) never seekes to his father, till that *hee came to himselfe*, then hee saw his error, and resolved to returne to his father. The Prophet Chap. 5. 15. bringeth in God, coupling these two together, *Till they acknowledge their offence; and seeke my face:* because wee must first acknowledge our offence, before wee can seeke Gods face,

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face, the full stomacke of a *Pharisee* will never thirst to drinke of the cup of salvation: onely the hungrie and the thirstie; therefore God *fillethe the hungrie with good things, and sendeth away the full emptie*: You see who they are that **C H R I S T** calleth to bee eased of their sinnes; even the wearie and laden, *Come unto mee yee that are wearie and laden*: that is, yee, who finde your consciences to be laden with the burden of the Law, and the burden of sinne and are so weary of these burdens, that they are grievous to you to beare. Such also bee they whom hee calleth sinners, and sicke. *Matth. 9. 12. 13. The whole neede not a Physitian, but the sicke, I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* What? Is there any whole? Is there any righteous? No, indeed, all are sinners, all are sicke: but hee calleth onely those sinners and sicke, who feele and acknowledge themselves to be such: as for the rest whose eyes are not opened to see the miserable estate wherein they stand by nature, he termes them righteous, and whole. Such are they whom he calleth lost, *Matth. 18. 24. I am sent but unto the lost sheepe*, that is, unto such as are lost in their owne opinion: It is onely those whom hee seeketh and saveth, as is well set forth in the Parables, *of the lost Sheepe, lost Groate, and lost Childe*, Such also are they who are called poore: *Blessed are the poore in spirit*, namely these who finde themselves to abound with many inward wants: finally they are called fatherlesse. In the fourth verse of this Chap. *With thee the fatherlesse findeth mercie*, as if hee should say, when as a man is brought to the straights of a poore desolate shiftlesse Orphan, then is he a subject fit for mercie. So, that it wee would returne unto the Lord, first wee must see our straying from the Lord: If wee would seeke Gods face, first wee must ac-

Luke 7. 33.

Matth. 11. 28.

Luke 19. 10.

Luke, 15, Matth. 5. 12

knowledge our offence: If wee would have God to fill us with good things, first wee must bee hungrie, even emptied of our evill liquor: If wee would have CHRIST to refresh us with rivers of water, and flagons of wine; then wee must be thirstie, that is, pained through the sense of our want of spirituall drinke: If wee would have CHRIST to ease us of our burdens, first wee must bee wearie of them, that is, wee must feelee our burdens to lye heavie upon us, and be grieved with the sense of them: If wee would have the Saviour to save us, wee must bee sinners, that is, humbled with the sight and sense of our finnes: If wee would have that great Physician to cure us, wee must first be sicke, that is, sensible of our disease, for he will not cure any of us, till first hee have launced our wounds unto the very bottome: If wee would have the good Sheeheard to finde us, wee must bee lost in our selves, even out of all hope of salvation in respect of anie thing that is in us. Finally, If wee would have the God of mercie to shew mercie unto us, then first wee must be fatherlesse, that is, hopelesse and helpelesse in our selves.

Jam. 5. 5. For hee is the *God that resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.* Hereby then may a man judge of himselfe, whether or no, hee bee in the way of salvation. Didst thou never see thy wofull miserie, and the wretched estate wherein thou art by reason of sinne, how thou hast turned thy backe upon God, and art out of his favour? Then hast thou just cause to suspect thy selfe, that thou hast not yet entred at the straight gate, to walke towards the Lord; for as there can be no birth without the paines of the travaile going before: so neyther any true cōversion, without some terrours of the Law, and straits of conscience. The Infant that hath beene layd onely nine Moneths, in the wombe of the mother, is not delivered with-
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out paine, suppose shee conceived it with pleasure: and Thinkest thou to part with sinne, which in thee was conceived with thee, and which since, so often thou hast nourished with pleasure, and not to prove the dolours of the second birth? No, not assuredly, there is the humbled soule, the wounded conscience, the contrite spirit, the broken heart, the mourning weede, the melting eye, the pale countenance, the voyce of lamentation, these are the dolours of the second birth, which wee meete with so soone as wee begin to returne to the Lord. On the other part, Hast thou found in thy selfe these inward wrestlings and humiliations? Hast thou groaned under the burden of thy sinne, and under the burden of Gods wrath? Hast thou felt the terrours of God fighting against thee, and the invenomed arrowes of the Almighty sticking fast in thy ribbes? Then may thou conceive good hope that thou art in the way of salvation. If thou bee possessed with an opinion of thine owne wandring from the Lord; If thou be convicted that thou hast strayed from him: Then it is like thou wilt seeke to returne. Therefore doth God oftentimes call upon men to consider their wayes, to call their lives to account, that so they may see how farre their soule is averted from God. *Know thy sinnes, O Ierusalem, Iere. 3. 13.* The like speech is used by the Prophet Zephanie, *Examine yourselves oh my people.* Yea, the Prophet Ieremie doth oftentimes put us in minde of this dutie, *Oh let us search and trie our wayes, and turne unto the Lord.* First wee must search our wayes, to finde out our owne wandrings, and then returne unto the Lord.

Zeph 2.1.

Lam. 3. 20.

And that yee may understand what is the dutie here required (because this word *Returne* doth expresse a change, not of place, but of qualities) I will shew unto you. First

from whence; Secondly to whom, Thirdly how wee must turne. As for the first wee must returne from our sinnes: This is expressed *Isai 55.7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous his owne imaginations, and returne unto the Lord.* Let the wicked forsake his wayes, there is *Terminus à quo*. This turning from sinne is called Mortification, and it containes five things. First, a sence and sorrow for sinne. Secondly, a hatred and detestation of sinne. Thirdly, a purpose in minde to leave sinne. Fourthly, an inclination in will to doe the same. Fiftly, an indeavour in life and conversation to forsake sinne altogether. This must hee doe, that will returne unto the Lord: First hee must bee cast downe with a deepe sight and sence of his sinne, saying with *David, I agnize my sinne, and am sorry for mine iniquite.* He must hate and abhorre sinne, as the greatest evill in the world, saying with the same Prophet, *Doe I not hate everie evill way.* He must resolve with himselfe never to commit any sinne. This must bee also the desire of his heart, and the indeavour of his whole life. Otherwise, hee cannot returne unto the Lord, for God will not take a wicked man by the hand, nor have fellowship with the throne of iniquitie.

Psal. 38. 18.

Psal. 119. 138.

Againe. To whom must we turne? *To the Lord*, according to that *Jerem. 4. 1. O Israel, if thou returne, returne unto me, saith the Lord;* not to any other, not to my Angels, not to my Saints, not to my Martyres, not to my Mother; but to my owne selfe. In the 7. Chap. vers. 16. this people is accused that *They did returne, but not to the most high.* They had some beginning of repentance, but it fayled by the way, and brought them not so farre as home to the Lord. *They were like a deceitfull bow,* for, after all their aymes and offers of turning to the Lord, they started back, and

and returned not to the Lord, but to their Idols, they returned to their sinnes as a Dogge to his vomite. It is not enough then to cease from sinne, but withall wee must turne unto the Lord; that is, wee must turne our hearts upward to heaven, setting our affections on things that are above; wee must fixe our eye upon God, and make towards him with the foote, walking in the way of his Commandements, that all men may see that wee are not of this world, but that our conversation is in heaven. This turning to the Lord, is called a rising to newnesse of life, and it hath three parts. First, a resolution in the minde. Secondly, a lust in the will. Thirdly, an indeavour in life and conversation to obey God. Every man ought to resolve as *Ioshua*; *I and myne house will serve the Lord.* And as *David*, *I have sworne, and I will performe it, that I will keepe thy righteous judgements.* This must bee his desire also, as it was *Pauls*, hee desired to live honestly. Hereunto *Barnabas* exhorted the *Antiochians* that with their heart they would cleave unto the Lord. And finally hereunto must wee indeavour our selves throughout the whole course of our life. So did the blessed Apostle *Act. 24.16.* Herein I indeavour my selfe to have alway a cleare conscience towards God and towards Men. And *David*, *I have a respect to all thy commandements.* Whosoever hath these, is turned from sinne unto the Lord.

Iosh. 24. 15.

Psal. 119. 106.

Act. 13. 12.

Act. 11. 35.

Psal. 119. 6.

Isa. 2. 12.

The manner how wee must returne, is expressed by the Prophet *Isa. Turne unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping, and mourning.* Whence yee may observe foure properties of our conversion. First, wee must turne with the heart, therefore our conversion must be voluntarie: there is a reformation which is not voluntarie, but rather against the will, when a man turnes not from sinne, but sinne turnes from him: because eyther hee cannot pra-

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Psal. 51. 6.

Este it for want of strength, or dare not for feare of punishment. Such a man may seeme to turne from sinne, but it is not with his heart. Wee must turne with the heart, even so willingly, that it be our chiefe delight to use all meanes for to set forward this worke: for nothing is done well, but that which is done with the will. Secondly, wee must turne, not onely with our heart, but *with all our heart*, therefore our conversion must be sincere: for as in Scripture the Phrases of a double heart, 1 Chron. 12. 33. a divided heart, Hos. 10. 2. A heart and a heart, Psal. 12. 2. are used to signifie hypocritie. So this phrase, *With all the heart*, doth signifie sinceritie. Then wee must turne unto the Lord *with all our heart*, that is to say, sincerely, and not for shew onely: wee must draw neere unto God, not onely with the lips, but with the heart also: for *Hee loveth truth in the inward affections*. In this sense it is said of David, that hee followed God with all his heart, 1. King. 14. 8. And of Iosiah, that Hee turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soule, and with all his might. 2. King. 23. 25. And of the people in the time of King Asa, that the oath which they made before the Lord, was *With all their heart*, 2. Chron. 15. 15. But Jerem. 3. 10. The Lord accuseth his people for want of this sinceritie, *Her rebellious sister Judah, hath not returned unto me with her whole heart, but faynedly*. Thirdly, wee must turne *with all our heart*, therefore our conversion must be a thorow change of the whole man, of the whole life; though it be imperfect in degrees, yet it must be perfect in regard of parts. Wee must not halt betweene God and Baal: Wee cannot serve both God and Mammon: God will not be content with a part of the heart; he will eyther have all, or none. It is said of Iehu, that he did not walke in the Law of the Lord, *with his whole heart*, for why? Albeit hee obeyed God in

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Some things, cutting off the house of *Achab*, Yet hee departed not from the sinne of *Ieroboam*, 2. King. 10. 31. And so there be many that give but the halfe turne, like to *Agrippa* who was (not altogether, but) almost perswaded to become a *Christian*. Some turning their wordes, not their deeds, as our verball professors. And others againe turning from many sinnes, and yet (with *Herod*) remaine untur-
ned from one speciall beloved sinne. These be but false turnings: our conversion must bee a thorow change, wee must turne with all our hearts. Finally, wee must turne not onely with all our hearts, but also with fasting, weeping, and mourning: therefore our conversion must not be inward onely; but it must bee expressed outwardly in these things, wherein consists the practise of humiliation, namely, fasting, &c. And that especially in the time of any great affliction, such as this was when the Prophet *Isaiah* had foretold the people of the comming of the *Chaldeans*. *Esther* when shee heard of the intended destruction of the *Iewes*, appointed a fast. So did *Nehemiah* when hee heard of the desolation of *Ierusalem*, and *Iehosaphat* when the *Moabites* came up against him: and *David* when *Saul* and *Jonathan* were slaine: and the *Israelites* when they were overthrowne by the *Benjamites*: and the *Ninivites* when destruction was threatened against them. And have wee not just cause to doe the like at this time? If wee consider our grievous sinnes, and the judgements of God which hang over our heads, together with the troublesome estate of Gods Church in other places. Even this last may minister unto us sufficient matter of griefe, though our owne private estate were never so peaceable. Godly *Nehemiah* being placed in the honourable service of *Artasbastes*, was not so much comforted at his owne good estate,

Esth. 4. 16.

Nehem. 1. 41.

2. Chr. 20. 33.

2. Sam. 1. 12.

Judg. 20. 26.

1. Sam. 3.

Nehem. 1. 4.

2 King 19. 4.

1. Sam. 4. 19.

Psal. 137. 2.

Isa. 2. 15.

as grieved at the desolation of *Jerusalem*: Decay of Religion and increase of Idolatry, made *Elijah* wearie of his life: The Arke of God captivated, and the glory departed from *Israel*, drave all comfort out of the heart of *Phineas* wife. These (and many more examples) teach us, That the affliction of *Ioseph* should bee the matter of our griefe. Cast now but an eye upon the ruefull face of Christendome; and yee will finde that it is time to Hang up our Harpes upon the Willowes, and (as the Prophet calls us) to blow the Trumpet in *Sion*, and to sanctifie a fast: turning unto the Lord, with all our hearts, and with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

But here yee may aske mee the question, Whether or not it be in our power to returne unto the Lord, since wee are exhorted thereunto? Answer, No, without a speciall grace given us from above. The Scripture everie where hath disabled us, pronouncing a man by nature to be the Childe of wrath, Ephes. 2. 3. A transgressor from the wombe, Isai. 48. 8. Dead in sinnes and trespasses, Ephes. 2. 1. Coloss. 2. 13. Wee are not onely sicke with sinne, or wounded by sinne, or halfe dead, but starke dead, bereft of all spirituall life, sense, and motion. And therefore in our selves wee are of no strength, Rom. 5. 6. For our minde is darke, Ephes. 5. 8. Not perceiving the things of the spirit, 1. Cor. 2. 14. Our will perverse, Gen. 6. 5. Ierem. 17. 9. The affections rebellious, Tit. 3. 3. Rom. 3. 12. And wee are so confirmed in this naturall corruption, that wee can no more doe good, then an *Ethiopian* can change his skinne, or a *Leopard* his spots, Ierem. 13. 23. or, Then an evill Tree can bring forth good fruite, Matth. 7. 18. So that faith is Gods gift, Ephes. 2. 8. Phil. 1. 29. So is repentance, 2. Tim. 2. 25. So is the knowledge of heavenly mysteries, Matth. 13. 11. In a word, every thing that

that is good in us, is from Gods speciall grace, For wee are not sufficient of our selves to thinke any thing as of our selves : but our sufficiencie is of God, 2. Corinth 3. 5. It is God that worketh in you both to will and to doe, Phil. 2. 13. For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? 1. Cor. 4. 7. As if hee should say, thou differs much from others, who are not as yet converted; but it is not thy selfe that hath made this separation, by the right use of thy owne free will, embracing that grace, which was equally offered unto them: but it is God that wrought more powerfully in thee, then in them: For God doth not onely beseech us, by the Ministry of reconciliation; but also Hee powres upon us the spirit of grace, Zach. 12. 10. Hee sheds on us abundantly the holy spirit, Tit. 3. 6. He workes powerfully in us, Ephes. 3. vers. 20. So 2. Thes. 1. 11. Hee is said to worke faith with power, and Ephes. 1. 19. It is called the exceeding greatnesse of his power, and the working of his mightie power; and Colos. 2. 12. This power in the conversion of a sinner, is equalled to that whereby God raised up CHRIST from the dead. Our Saviour himselfe (to expresse this powerfull working) calls our conversion a drawing, No man can come to mee, except the father draw him, Iohn 6. 44. Hee doth indeede draw us; for of our selves wee are enemies to our owne salvation, and doe nothing else, but resist the holy Ghost in the Ministry of the Word: yet hee who is able to doe exceeding abundantly, above all that wee aske or thinke, overcometh this resistence in the will of man, and of unwilling, makes us willing: This is his Grace which never is in vaine; for all that the father giveth mee, shall come to mee, saith CHRIST, Iohn 6. 37. It is also called a boring of the eare, Psal. 40. 6. An opening of the heart,

1. Cor. 15. 10.

Act. 16. 14. The Circumcision of the heart, *Deut. 10. 6.* And further to signifie not onely Gods powerfull working in our conversion; but also our owne inabilityie to bring any helpe to this worke, it is called a new creation, a regeneration, a vivification and resurrection from the dead. A man cannot create himselfe, nor beget himselfe, nor quicken himselfe when hee is dead, Nay, hee cannot so much as bring anie helpe to these workes, but is meerely patient: So is hee in his conversion to God. Finally the worke of our conversion is called a renovation of the heart, *Ezech. 36. 26.* *I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you, I will take away the stonie heart, and give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walke in my Statutes.* This is a promulgation of the Covenant of Grace; where yee may perceiue the difference betweene this new Covenant, and the old. In the covenant of workes God required obedience to his law, and wee were unable to performe it. In the covenant of Grace, God requirerh faith and repentance, and wee are as unable to performe that Wherein then is the difference? Even in this, that the first covenant had no such power annexed to it, to worke in us, that which it required from us; but in the new covenant, that condition which God requireth from us, hee worketh in us. Hee calls us to retorne, and hee turnes us. But then (will a Papist say) To what purpose are these exhortations? Doth God commaund us that which is impossible? And are his admonitions in vaine? I answer. First, God commaunds us many things which are impossible, not absolutely, but as the Apostle speaketh, *In asmuch as the Law is weake, because of the flesh:* For once God gave us a power to doe whatsoever hee commaunded, and wee by our fall have lost this power; yet hath

not

*Psalm. 51. 10.**2 Cor. 5. 17.**Ephes. 2. 10.**Iohn 3. 3.**Lam. 1. 18.**Ephes 2. 8.**Iohn, 5. 28.**Rom. 7. 14.*

not God lost his right to demaund that debt of obedience, which his creature oweth unto him: So that the Commandements of God in this state of corruption are the measure of our debt, not of our strength; they shew us what wee should doe, not what wee can doe. Secondly, neyther are these exhortations in vaine; for God doth not regenerate us by sudden enthusiasmes; but by ordinary meanes: and these exhortations are the meanes, without which ordinarily no man is, or can bee converted: Wee are begotten by the word of trueth. Iam. 1. 18. Through the Gospell, 1. Cor. 4. 15. Of the incorruptible seede of the word, 1. Pet. 1. 23. Now no man will say that it is in vaine to use ordinarie meanes, as to take meate for to nourish our bodies, Physicke to recover our health, to cast seede in the ground, for to bring forth fruite, though the event bee not in our power, but in Gods hands: So neyther can these exhortations to repentance be in vaine, though it bee not in our power to returne unto the Lord. Thirdly, these exhortations serve to humble us with a sight of our owne inabilitie, and also to direct us what things wee are to aske of God by prayer: according to that of S. Augustine, *Deus iubet aliqua, quae non possumus; ut noverimus quid ab illo petere debeamus.* God commaunds us some things which are not in our power, that wee might know what things wee have to aske of him by prayer. For when I heare that I am commaunded to returne unto the Lord, and yet looking upon mine owne strength, I finde no such power in my selfe; this must make mee goe out of my selfe, and flie unto the throne of Grace, crying (with the Spouse of CHRIST) Draw mee, and I will runne after thee, Cant. 1. 3. and (with Ephraim) Convert mee, and I shalbe converted, and with David) create in me a cleane heart, and with the Disciples, Lord

De gratia & lib. arbit. cap. 16.

*Jerem. 31. 18
Psalm. 51. 10*

S. August.

Jerem. 31. 19.

increase our faith; and with that holy Father, *Domine, da, quod jubes, & jube quod vis*, Give mee a power to doe that which thou commaunds, and then commaund mee to doe what thou wilt. Finally, this precept is given unto us, because there is something in our power to doe, we can use the meanes, as goe to Church, and heare the word: Besides after that God in the first moment of our uprising, hath revived the heart, and given life to the dead will; then, *acti agimus*, Wee are no longer passive, but coworkers with God, *After I was converted, I repented* (saith *Ephraim*) Hence as our conversion is ascribed to God, as the first and sole Author, so it is ascribed to our selves as instruments of God apprehending his grace, and working forward with it. God is said to give faith, and wee are said to beleeve: God is said to give repentance, and wee are said to repent: God is said to turne us, and wee are said to turne unto the Lord.

From the exhortation, I come to the arguments: Indeece there is not a word in all the exhortation but it containes in it an argument to invite them to repentance. First, *O Israel*, Thou that art Gods owne people, What shame is it for thee to turne thy backe upon God? Secondly, *Returne*, thou hast gone astray, therefore come backe againe into the right way. Thirdly, *unto the Lord*, hee is *I E H O V A H*, the fountaine of all goodnesse, that hath right unto thee by creation, by redemption, by covenant, by many other obligations: therefore returne unto him. Fourthly, he is *thy God*, and therefore if thou wilt returne unto him, hee will receive thee. Fifthly, *Thou hast fallen by thine iniquitie*, therefore continue no longer in that course which hath procured thy fall, least thou perish; but returne unto the Lord, that he may rayse thee up. But the two last are the chiefe motives,

rives, one whereof is taken from Gods mercie, hee is *thy God*: another from their owne miserie; *Thou hast fallen by thine iniquitie.*

First, hee is *thy God*; thine by creation, thine by redemption, thine by adoption, thine by contract and covenant; for this is the covenant which hee made with *Abraham thy father: I will bee a God unto thee, and to thy seede after thee.* Therefore thou may assure thy selfe, thy sinne is pardonable, if thou wilt returne unto him, hee will imbrace thee in the armes of his mercie. Hence obserue that the exhortations to repentance in Scripture, are founded commonly upon the mercie of God, as *Isai. Chap. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous his owne imaginations, and returne unto the Lord, and he will have mercie upon him, and to our God, for hee will abundantly pardon.* In the Latin, it is, *Multas ad ignoscendum*: Whereupon (saith Bernard.) *In hoc multo, nihil deest, ubi est omnipotens misericordia, & misericors omnipotentia*: Hee can pardon, for his mercie is omnipotent; and hee will pardon, for his omnipotencie is mercifull. *Hof. 6. 1. Come (say the repenting Israelits) let us returne unto the Lord; for hee hath torne, and hee will heale us, hee hath smitten, and hee will bind us up.* *Ioel 2. 13. Turne unto the Lord your God for he is gracious, and mercifull, slow to anger, and of great kindenesse, and repenteth him of the evill.* And *Ierem. 3. There bee many the like exhortations, all upon this ground, vers. 12. Thou disobedient Israel returne, and I will not let my wrath fall upon you for I am mercifull, and will not alway keepe mine anger.* Again, vers. 14. *O yee disobedient Children, turne againe, for I am your Lord.* And after vers. 22. *O yee disobedient children returne, and I will heale your rebellions.* This is the argument used by the preacher of repentance, Repent Maith. 33
for

for the kingdome of heaven is at hand, in which **C H R I S T** is readie to dispense mercie, and forgivenesse to the repenting sinner. So here, *O Israel returne unto the Lord*, for he is thy God, not, hee is a great, or a just, or a wise, or a powerfull God; but hee is *thy God*; grounding his exhortation upon Gods mercie. The reason is, because a sinner apprehending nothing but rigour and severitie in God, will never come in and submit himselfe. No, *There is mercie with thee O Lord that thou mayst bee feared*. It is not the consideration of Gods greatness, nor of his power, nor of his justice, nor of his wisdom, that can make the heart of a sinner relent toward him; but it is the consideration of his mercie: when looking upon the mercy of God, and merits of **C H R I S T**, I get some hope and inckling of pardon, then will I come in, creeping and crouching before God; as the *Syrians* to *Achab*, with ropes about their neckes, because they had heard that the *Kings of Israel* were mercifull. The thundering out of the threatnings and judgments of the Law, will awake a secure heart; but nothing will affect a mans minde, and even melt his soule to make him returne unto the Lord, but the due knowledge and consideration of the unspeakeable riches of Gods mercie: The remembrance of his fathers house, made the heart of the prodigall to relent; So will the consideration of Gods mercies worke upon our heart, if once our hearts be inflamed with the sense of Gods love towards us, Oh then the working of our bowels! the stirring of our affections! the melting and relenting of our repenting hearts! then will wee lament after the Lord, and grieve that ever wee have so grieved so good and gracious a God. Therefore you see the wicked, that get a sight of their sinnes, because they have

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Psalm. 130. 4

2 Sam. 7. 3

not a sight of Gods mercie, they runne away from God, as *Adam*, they are swallowed up of dispaire as *Cain*, and never seeke after that mercie which they know not: But the Godly with the sight of their sinnes, having a sense of Gods mercie, and a sight of Gods face reconciled to them in *I E S U S C H R I S T*, How doe they seeke after that mercie with a longing desire? Out of the deepes with *David*, and out of the belly of Hell with *Ionas*, they call upon God. Even when wounded by God, they goe to him to bee healed, as the repenting Israelites, *Come let us returne unto the Lord, for hee hath wounded, and hee will heale us.* H. 1. 6. i. and these converts that sought for ease of him that pricked them, *Men and brethren what shall wee doe?* A. 7. 2. 37. So that there is nothing in God so forceable to drive a man to repentance, as the consideration of Gods mercie. As *Tully* said when hee pleaded before *Cesar* for the life and libertie of *Ligarius*: *O Cesar, none of thy vertues is more gracious, or more admirable, then thy mercie: Men come neare to God in nothing so much as in saving the afflicted: Thy fortune hath nothing greater then that thou hast power, thy nature nothing better then that thou hast will to shew mercie, and to save others.* So may I say among all the properties of the divine nature, there is none more admirable or more gracious then his mercie. It is not his power, it is not his wisdom, it is not his justice wherein wee rejoyce; but it is his mercie: If there were not mercie in God, I should dispaire, there is so much miserie in mee, therefore *I beseech you brethren by the mercies of* Rom. 12. 1. *God: I will not adure you by the threatnings, but I beseech you by the mercies of God, Knowing that*
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the

Rom, 2, 4,

the goodnesse of God leadeth you to repentance; hee is thy God, and therefore O Israel returne unto him.

Jam, 3, 3,

The other argument is taken from their sense of miserie, *Thou hast fallen by thine iniquitie*. Our falls in Scripture, doe sometimes signifie our finnes, *In many things wee fall all* (saith the Apostle James) and sometimes our afflictions, as in that place of Salomon,

Proub, 21, 16,

The just man falleth seven times a day: so heere it signifieth affliction, Thou hast fallen, namely into danger and destruction; thou art afflicted, therefore returne. Where wee may observe, That our falls are many times an occasion of our risings, and afflictions are of excellent use to turne us to God: for this is the motive which the Prophet useth. Thou art fallen, therefore returne. And hardly could hee use a better; for affliction is a most effectuall meanes to make our hearts relent and resolve into the teares of unsayned repentance, according to that of *Elihu*, *God openeth the eares of men by their corrections, which hee had sealed, that hee might cause man to turne away from his purpose*. So the Lord taught *Miriam* by leprosie to forgoe her murmuring. Hee awakened *Jonas* out of his securitie, by casting him into the Sea. Hee cured *Zachary* of infidelitie, by striking him with dumbnesse. Hee diverted *Saul* from his evill course by blindness. Thus *Manasses* (who forgot God in his prosperitie) did seeke unto him in adversitie; the Heathen Marriners did pray unto God in a storme; and the *Ninevites* did humble themselves by fasting and prayer when destruction was threatened against them; when the brethren of *Ioseph* were distressed in *Egypt*, they did remember the injurie they had done to their brother; when

Job, 33, 16,

Gen, 42, 21,

when the prodigall sonne was pinched with want, *Luk 15, 18,* then did hee resolve to returne to his father: but especially this may bee scene in the Iewish Church. For, though in their prosperitie (as the Lord himselfe observeth) *They turned their backe yet in their trouble; Jerem 2, 27, they said; Arise and helpe us.* This is observed also by the Prophet *Isaiab, Lord in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastisement was upon them.* And David to the same purpose. *When hee slew them, they sought him: Yea (speaking of the manifold kindes of miserie wherewith the faithfull are exercised) hee maketh this the foote of his song, Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and hee delivered them. Psalms 81, 7, Psalms 107, 6,* Apollonius writes of certaine people that could see nothing in the day, but all in the night: In like manner wee are so blinded with the bright sunne-shine of prosperitie, that wee cannot see those things which concerne our peace; but when the winter night of miserie comes, then *schola Crucis, schola lucis.* Wee are all branches of the Vine, and therefore wee must bee pruned and cut with the knife of affliction that wee may bring forth fruite: and this is the last meanes which God ordinarily useth to convert obstinate sinners: when nothing can prevaile with us, then doth hee visite our iniquities with the rod, and our sinnes with scourges; and hee is so confident that this will drive vs to repentance, that in the fift Chapter of this prophesie, vers. 15. (having threatened to withdraw all the testimonies of his love, and favour from his people, *I will goe, and returne to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seeke my face*) Hee addes, *In their affliction they will seeke me*

carely: which was accordingly verified in the event; for in the next words they call one another after this manner, *Come let us returne unto the Lord, for he hath wounded us, &c.* And surely this is a strange thing, that affliction should make men turne to him that smiteth them; it would seeme that such dealing should rather terrifie them, and make them runne away from God. *Adam* when hee saw God to bee angrie, fled from his presence, and this is naturall to everie creature to love it selfe, and to flie from that which is hurtfull unto it: strike a dogge, and hee will flie from you. Therefore that yee may conceive this riddle, how sweete comes out of sower: yee shall understand, that afflictions being considered in their owne nature, are the fruites of sinne, the evils of punishment, the testimonies of Gods wrath, the curses of the Law, and the first flashes of hels fire: Therefore when afflictions follow their kinde, they bring forth nothing but evill fruite, such as impatiencie, malice against the instruments, murmuring against God, the use of unlawfull meanes, and finally dispaire, as in *Pharao, Saul, Ieroboam, Achaz*, of whom it is said, *that in the time of his tribulation hee did yet trespassse more against the Lord.* But whensoever afflictions doe drive a man to repentance, it is not properly of themselves that they produce so good an effect, but by accident, as they are so disposed by the infinite wisdom, power, and goodnesse of God, to whom onely it is proper to worke by contraries: hee brings light out of darknesse, good out of evill; by sinne hee condemned sinne, by death hee destroyed death; by the foolishnesse of preaching, hee makes us wise: hee casts us downe that

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Isa. 54, 14.

2 Chron. 23, 22.

hee may rayse us up; hee workes joy out of feare, heaven out of hell: and by the Crosse which naturally doth banish a man from God, hee makes us returne to him; hee causeth this birth and suite of sinne to kill the mother that brought it forth, this temporarie punishment to become a fatherly chastisement, whereby wee are preserved from the everlasting punishment of hels fire; these testimonies of his wrath, to become signes of his love, and scales of his adoption; and these curses of the Law, and flashes of hell, to become Evangelicall blessings, and an ordinarie way whereby wee may travell toward his heavenly kingdome. And therefore afflictions are fitly compared to the fire, which purifieth the gold, and consumeth the straw; and to the winde, which purgeth the Wheate, and bloweth away the Chaffe: and finally to the red Sea, which was to the Israelites a way, to the Egyptians a grave. Now since afflictions produce so divers effects: wee must labour to have our afflictions so sanctified, as that wee may bee bettered by them. To this effect, First when wee are under any Crosse, wee must labour after tender hearts, that wee may bee affected with griefe and paine: for there is not a greater enemy to our profitt by afflictions, then that senselesse indolencie, whereby men are not affected with Gods judgements, like those Israelites, of whom the Prophet saith, *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not sorrowed*: For, when afflictions being added to our sinnes, as a double waight cannot bruse our hearts, and presse out of them sighes and groanes, it is not likely that sinne alone will worke in them sorrow and remorse, but on the other part, if wee

bee sensible of our afflictions, then this worldly sorrow will make way for godly sorrow, as a Needle doth for the threade. Secondly, let us remember that all the afflictions which doe befall us come from God: This is another lett that hindereth many from profiting by afflictions, even their blindnesse, whereby they ascribe all their calamities wholly to secundarie causes, and inferior meanes, and never looke up to the hand of God striking them, which is the chiefe cause; for *there is no evill in the Citie which the Lord hath not done.* Thirdly, let us looke backe into our former courses, and see what wee have done against God, for hee would not strike us without a cause: by this examination wee will come to a sight and sense of our sinnes: wee will finde that wee have gone astray from God, and have fallen because of our iniquitie. Finally, with the sense of our sinnes, let us strive to get a sight of Gods mercie revealed in the Gospell, remembering that hee is our God: so will we desire to returne to him.

But the Prophet would not onely make them sensible of their fall, but also of their sinne; therefore he illustrates this argument from the cause, *Thou hast fallen by thine iniquitie*, or because of thine iniquity. Here observe, That iniquitie procures a fall, so that if wee have fallen, then we have committed iniquitie; so if we commit iniquitie, wee shall assuredly fall. I say, If wee have fallen, we may accuse our iniquities which is the deserving cause of all our afflictions. The Apostle tels us, that *by sinne death entered into the world*, and if it had not beene for sinne, death (whereby wee are to understand every thing that is penall and hurtfull to the creature) could never have found an entrie. So the Church in the *Lamentations*,

Where-

Amos, 3, 6,

Rom, 5, 12,

Lam, 1, 19

Wherefore is the living man sorrowfull? Man suffereth for his sinne: And the Psalmist, Fooles by reason of their transgressions, and because of their iniquities are afflicted. *Salomon* maketh affliction to bee (as it were) the shadow of sinne which doth alway attend it, Affliction followeth sinners, and as our fals convince us to have committed iniquities, so our iniquities forewarne us of a fall: For he that soweth iniquitie shall reape affliction. This doctrine is sufficiently proved by Scripture, reason and experience. God threatened *Adam*, that at what time hee did eate of the forbidden Tree, hee should die. Everie sinne unto man is the forbidden Tree, if wee meddle wth it, wee shall finde no better fruite upon it then *Adam* found: the bitter fruite of death, growes upon the pleasant Tree of sinne: It is the sentence of the law, *Cursed is everie man that abideth not in all things that are written in the booke of the Law*. This is confirmed by the Apostle *Paul*, saying, *The reward of sinne is death*. And *Iames*, *Sinne when it is finished, bringeth forth death*. Hee saith not, that every sinne bringeth forth death, but onely sinne when it is finished, or perfected, that is come to an height: for God in his mercie forgiveth sinnes not finished, or at least hee tolerateth them, till they come to perfection, that the sinner may bee without all excuse: but in his justice, hee judgeth and condemneth sinnes consummate by hardnesse of heart, and impenitencie, as hee sheweth himselfe, *Amos 1.3*. *For three transgressions of Damascus, and for foure, I will not turne away the punishment thereof, &c.* As if hee had said, if *Damascus* had sinned onely once in persecuting of my Church, I would turne away my judgments: but they have sinned often, *To three trans-*

Psalm, 107, 17,

Proverb, 13, 21,

Proverb, 22, 5,

Rom, 6, 23,

Iam, 1, 8,

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Psalm, 107. 17.

Proverb, 13. 21.

Proverb, 22. 8.

Rom, 6. 23.

Iam, 1. 8.

transgressions, they have added foure, they have threshed Gilead, with threshing instruments of Iron, and for so many transgressions I will not turne away their punishment. Againe of sinne finished it is not said, that it deserveth death, which is common to all sinne; but that it bringeth forth death, where the word *ἀποδίδωμι* signifieth to bee delivered of that which hath beene conceived. So that sinne when once it commeth to perfection, is with childe of death, and must needes bee delivered. When Gods patience is abused, it will become furie, when the cup of Gods wrath is full, it must of necessitie runne over; when the measure of our iniquities is fulfilled, then must God powre forth the vials of his wrath: And great reason there is why it must bee so, if wee consider the justice of God, the nature of sinne, and the trueth of Gods threatening. The justice of God is such, that hee hateth sinne; and therefore will hee punish it. *The scolish shall not stand in thy sight, (saith David) for thou hastest all them that worke iniquitie,* reasoning from the nature of God; God hateth iniquitie, therefore hee will punish it. And the Apostle, *It is a just thing with God, to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you.* This is the justice of God (which even the Gentils knew) that they who commit such things are worthe of death. Againe the nature of sinne is to crie, *The cry of Sodome is great:* It crieth, citing us before the Tribunall of God, as guiltie of lease Majestic; it cryeth unto the heavens for vengeance; provoking God to revenge, and not suffering him to rest in heaven till hee hath inflicted punishment. Finally Gods truth is such that none of his threatenings can fall to the ground

Psalms, 5, 3

2, Thes, 2, 6

Rom, 2, 32

Genes, 18, 20

ground; but hee hath threatened a fall to iniquitie, and according to his threatening, hath hee executed his wrath upon impenitent sinners. When the earth was filled with violence, then God sent the flood *Gen. 6, 13* upon the olde world. When the crime of *Sodome* waxed great before God, then sent hee Angels to destroy it. When the iniquitie of the *Amorites* was full, then were they cast forth. When *Achab* *Gen. 19 13.* sold himselfe to worke evill in the sight of the Lord, *Gen. 15. 16* then did the Lord bring evill upon him: When *Ierusalem* filled up the measure of their fathers, then *1. King 21 29.* they could not escape the damnation of hell. When the finnes of *Babell* are come to that height, that they reach unto the heaven, then will the Lord remember her iniquities. *Math. 21. 32.* Goe and enquire, what is become of those famous Churches planted by the Apostles, of *Corinth*, *Ephesus*, *Galatia*, &c. Are they not fallen by their iniquitie? What is become of Gods owne people, the *Iewes*? They are fallen, and that by their iniquitie (as the Lord himselfe declarerh) *Revel. 18. 5.* *Isaiah, 50. 1.* Behold for your iniquities are yee *Jerem. 49. 12.* sold, and because of your transgressions is your Mother forsaken. Now if God spared not them: How will hee spare us? I may say unto you (as the Lord doth to *Idumea*) Behold they whose judgement was not to drinke of the cup, (that is, they that were mine owne people, and had not so much deserved punishment as thou) have assuredly drunken, and art thou hee that shall goe unpunished, thou shalt not goe unpunished, but thou shalt surely drinke of it. If, once our iniquities are come to the height,

F then

Genes. 6. 12.

Genes. 19. 4.

Isaiah, 1, 5.

then wee shall fall as they have fallen. Now finnes of a Nation are finished, and come to the height, when they are generall, when they are not punished, and when they are persevered in, men continuing in their finnes without repentance. First (I say) when they are generall; for so long as there bee onely some wicked men in a kingdome, their finnes are personall, and cannot bring the judgements of God upon the whole land; for tenn righteous men God would have spared Sodom: but if sinne become generall, *That all flesh hath corrupted his way upon the earth*: then will the deluge bee universall likewise. If all the men of Sodom, from the young to the old, even all the people from all quarters, conspire to commit filthinesse: then shall the whole Citie be overthrowne. Sinne was come to this height in Israel; for (saith Isaiah) *The whole head is sicke, & the whole heart heavie. From the sole of the foote unto the head, there is nothing whole therein, but wounds and swelling, and sores full of corruption. A conspiracie (saith the Lord himselfe) is found among the men of Iudah, and among the inhabitants of Ierusalem, Ierem. 11. 9.* For why? *The children of Israel, and the children of Iudah did evill, even they, their Kings, their Princes, their Priests, and their Prophets, the men of Iudah, and the inhabitants of Ierusalem, Ierem. 32. 32.* In so much that the Lord saith to the Prophet: *Runne to and fro by the streetes of Ierusalem, and behold now, and know, and enquire in the open places thereof, if yee can finde a man, or if there bee any that executeth judgement, and seeketh the truth, and I will spare it, Ierem.*

5.1. This generall revolt from God, is expressed by this Prophet in the fourth Chapter: *The Lord hath a controversie with the land, because there is no trueth, nor mercie, nor knowledge of God in the land, &c.* This was a generall, and so a nationall sinne: therefore is the punishment generall upon the Nation likewise. vers. 3. *The land shall mourne, and everie one that dwelleth therein shall bee cut off.* Secondly, The sinnes of a Nation are come to an height, when they are not punished by the Magistrate, but all goe on in their courses without controlment. When Phinehas smote the adulterous persons, hee turned Gods anger away from the children of Israel, and caused the plague to cease: but where there is not a Phinehas to draw the sword for the punishment of vice, there the guilt of these sinnes lye upon the land, and draw downe the judgements of God upon a Nation. In this case was Israel before her captivitie; for this is expressed as a cause of their destruction: *They execute no judgement, Jerem. 5. 28.* But (as Isaiah speaketh) *Their Princes were rebellious and companions of theeves; everie one loved gifts, and followed after rewards. Children were their Princes, and women had rule over them; they did justifie the wicked for reward.* A third degree of perfection in sinne is perseverance. When men continue in sinne without repentance, hardening their hearts against all admonitions. Israel was come to this height also: *For the Lord sent unto them all his servants the Prophets, rising up early, and saying, returne now every man from his evill way, and amend your workes: — but* Isaiah, 1. 23.
Chapt. 3. v. 4. 11.
Chapt. 5. v. 11.

they would not incline their eare, nor obey; and there-
upon came their fall: for it followeth in the Text.
vers. 17. *Therefore thus saith the Lord of hostes, behold
I will bring upon Iudah, and upon all the inhabitants
of Ierusalem, all the evill that I have pronounced against
them, because I have spoken unto them, but they would
not heare.* Now let us examine our selves, and see
whether wee bee come to such an height of iniqui-
tie, and I doubt we shall finde, First that sinne reigneth
universally, like an Epidemicall disease that possesseth
the whole bodie of the land. There is in great men,
sacriledge and oppression; in officers, briberie, ex-
tortion, and wresting of justice: In the cleargie, ig-
norance, lazinesse, and covetousnesse: In tradesmen,
fraude and deceite: In every corner Idolatrie, rob-
berie, and shedding of bloud: and What house is free
from adulterie, drunkennesse, and swearing? Next,
doe but consider whether these (and many more sinnes)
bee committed safely, without punishment. Oppres-
sion and sacriledge, have greatnesse for their patron:
injustice, briberie, and extortion, finde Lawyers
to pleade their cause: Idolatrie is but a sinne of tol-
eration: incest and usurie are veniall in poore men,
and veniall in the rich: pride, swearing, drunken-
nesse, and gluttonie, are commendable because com-
mon, as *Salvianus* complained in his time, *In hoc sce-
lus res devoluta, ut nisi quis malus fuerit, salvus esse
non possit.* In plaine English, except a man be thus
wicked, hee cannot bee reputed a good fellow. Final-
ly, robberie & parricide, doe sometimes finde pardon
And lastly, Doe wee not persevere in these sinnes, and
fall

De gubern. Dei
lib. 6.

fall away more and more, hardening our hearts
 against all admonitions? How then can wee escape
 a fall? Yea, have wee not fallen already? Consider
 but the estate of the reformed Churches, how in
 their infancie, when they were destitute of world-
 ly power, and all Princes and Potentates enemies
 unto them; yet then they did stand, maugre Anti-
 christ and all his associats; Gods protection was a
 wall of defence about them, that the furie of their
 enemies could not come neere them; and now when
 they were growne great in the eyes of the world, and
 Kings were become their nursing fathers, and
 Queenes their nursing mothers, to protect Religion
 with the sword: yet How hath the Lord humbled
 them, and made them to fall before their enemies? The
 reason hereof wee finde in that speech of *Azariah*
 the Prophet, to King *Asa*, *The Lord is with you, while*
yee are with him: but if yee forsake him, he will forsake
you: At first wee was with the Lord, and then hee was
 with us: but when we did forsake the Lord, & fall from
 our first love, and zeale of our profession; then did
 he breake downe the hedges, and let in the wilde Bore
 out of the wood, and the wilde beast out of the Forrest
 to destroy this Vine which he had planted, that wee
 may lament with *Jeremie*: *Wee have sinned,*
and have rebelled, therefore thou hast not spared.
 Thus hath God made us to fall: but unlesse wee re-
 turne unto him, there is yet a greater fall to come. The
 same God that made *Nebuchadnezzar* a scourge to
 his people; can send the *Spaniards* to scourge us. When
Phocas had built a mighty wall about his Pallace, for
 his

2. Chron. 1. 3

Psalme 30. 12

Lament. 3. 42

Cedron. 6. 11. pag. 512.

Serm. 87.

his securitie, in the night hee heard a voyce: O King though thou build'st high as the clouds, yet the Citie will easily be taken, the sin within will marre all. So let us never make so much preparation for our defence: yet unlesse we take a course with our sinnes, they will betray us into the hands of our enemies: For, (saith Ambrose,) *Graviores sunt inimici, mores pravi, quam hostes infesti.* Our sinnes, are enemies more to be feared then armed men. If God be with us, Who can bee against us? If wee stand against God, Who can withstand him?

Ion. 3. 8. 9.

Now to shut up all in a word: It is plaine that wee have gone astray as farre as *Israel* did; for, what is the vanitie after which wee have not gone a whoring? and now our iniquities are come to that height, that they forewarne us of a fall: *Therefore let every man turne from his evill way, and from the wickednesse in their hand. Who can tell if God will turne & repent and turne away from his fierce wrath, that wee perish not?* Yea, I can tell, that if wee repent, hee will turne away his wrath; for he desireth not the death of a sinner, and even now when the Axe is layd to the roote of the Tree, hee calls us to repentance. Therefore seeke the Lord while hee may bee found, call upon him while hee is neere; take up the resolution of repenting *Israel*, I will goe and returne to my first husband; for then it was better with me then now: follow the counsell of the Prophet, in the words following my Text. *Take with you words, and turne to the Lord, say unto him, Take away all iniquitie, and receive us graciously, so will wee render the calves of our lips. Asshur shall not save us, wee will not ride upon*

Isaiah, 55. 6.

Hef. 2. 7.

upon horses, neyther will wee say any more to the worke of our hands, yee are our Gods; for in thee the fatherlesse findeth mercie. Hee is our God, and therefore if wee seeke him, hee will bee found of us; and as hee hath wounded us, so hee will heale us; hee will even give us beautie for ashes, and the oyle of gladnesse for the spirit of heavinesse, and make the bones which he hath broken to rejoyce.

To this God, even our
God, &c.

FINIS.



ERRATA sic CORRIGE.

IN the Epistle Dedicatory, l. 8. for yea, *reade* I, l. 13, for our *reade* an, l. 30. for professor, *reade* protector, p. 7. l. 12 for heale, *reade* healed, p. 7. l. 16 for occasion *reade* reason, p. 10 l. 17. for thus, *reade* this, p. 11. l. 13 for was to come, *reade* was come.